

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

² Claim 11 (previously presented) The method according to claim 22 further comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient.

³ Claim 12 (previously presented) A method according to claim ²~~11~~, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

⁴ Claim 13 (previously presented) A method according to claim ²~~11~~, wherein the patient has a liver disease that is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claims 14 and 15 (cancelled)

⁵ Claim 16 (previously presented) A method according to claim ²~~11~~, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

⁶ Claim 17 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁵~~16~~, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a procaryotic host organism.

⁷ Claim 18 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁵~~16~~, wherein said

recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

Claim ⁸19 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁵16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

Claim ⁹20 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁸19, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

Claim ¹22 (currently amended) A method comprising screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease of viral origin, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

⁶
Claim 11 (previously presented) The method according to claim ²22 further comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient.

³
Claim ~~12~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

⁴
Claim ~~13~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, wherein the patient has a liver disease that is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claims 14 and 15 (cancelled)

⁵
Claim ~~16~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

⁶
Claim ~~17~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a procaryotic host organism.

⁷
Claim ~~18~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said

recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

8

5

Claim ~~19~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

9

8

Claim ~~20~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~19~~, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

Claim 22 (currently amended) A method comprising screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease of viral origin, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)